

Barriers and Opportunities for Integrating Gender Considerations into Local Economic Development in Romania

A project funded by the Office of Women in Development, Bureau for Global Programs, Field Support and Research, U.S. Agency for International Development under contract number FAO-0100-C-00-6005-00 with Development Alternatives, Inc.

March 2000



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A Women in Development Technical Assistance Project

Development Alternatives, Inc. ! International Center for Research on Women ! Women, Law and Development International
Academy for Educational Development ! Development Associates, Inc.

This publication was made possible through support provided by the Office of Women in Development, Bureau for Global Programs Field Support and Research, U.S. Agency for International Development, under the terms of Contract No. FAO-0100-C-00-6005-00. The opinions expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

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by

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March 2000



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This paper reflects the experience of WIDTECH's Democracy & Governance Specialist in Romania in December 1999 investigating local economic development (LED) efforts and ways to enhance results through attention to gender issues. While the paper serves as a trip report, it is also intended to provide a conceptual framework with practical guidance relating to gender and local economic development. The paper is therefore structured to (1) set the background for this investigation, (2) establish the conceptual framework for analysis, (3) report observations regarding women as partners for economic development (and related gender issues), and (4) offer five key recommendations.

The author would like to thank the Romanian people in Bucharest and in Cluj-Napoca whose support and input were invaluable. Special appreciation is due to Ecaterina Vasile from USAID/Romania and to Emod Farkas, USAID representative in Cluj. Both worked with very little lead time to provide background, set up meetings, and make arrangements for an intensive three-day process.

Thanks also to all the wonderful people in Cluj who eagerly shared their perspectives and hopes with a total stranger during a short visit. If anyone has doubts about the prospects for Romania, the enthusiasm and commitment of those new friends was nothing but inspiring.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

USAID/Romania asked USAID's Office of Women in Development to provide guidance on how to ensure that women benefit from and contribute to local economic development (LED) initiatives. WIDTECH's Democracy and Governance (D&G) specialist was asked to address the issue because of her experience with LED in Poland and Slovakia, and her work for the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The guidance outlined in this report stems from previous experience, from work in Cluj with participants from a USAID study tour on LED to Poland and Hungary, and from discussions with women in Cluj and Bucharest.

An analysis of women and LED begins with consideration of the objectives of LED: creating new, well-paid, sustainable jobs; increasing household incomes; strengthening local government resources; and improving the overall quality of life. Each objective raises some gender issues:

- Will women benefit from the new jobs? Are there jobs that women want?
- Whose income in a household increases, and how do the employment status and income of family members affect roles and dynamics within the home?
- Who decides how local resources are allocated?
- Who defines the quality of life that is sought and makes decisions regarding tradeoffs?

The analysis of women and LED proceeds with a look at the factors for successful LED initiatives—who is involved and how? Success depends on the talents, skills, and commitment of local people. Communities must engage people with vision; people of diverse perspectives; citizens with facility for advocacy, lobbying, and fundraising; representatives of all sizes and sectors in the private, profit-making sector; local government officials and civil servants; and citizens with nongovernmental organizations and civic groups. For the best possible results, it is critical that those with experience, determination, and talent be included—and this means women. In addition, the people engaged in LED should be motivated by public spirit, by a commitment to the community good, not just by their own business or economic interest. Often women have this perspective, recognizing the importance of good jobs, in terms of both income and self-esteem, for themselves, their families, and their friends.

Finally, the mechanisms of LED involve cooperation and collaboration. This approach to team work is often enhanced by involving women.

Romanian women are important resources for LED because of their education and experience. Women in the region are highly educated, have had strong work experience

and are currently engaged in a plethora of new activities—including the development of new products and services as well as the delivery of social services.

Yet women are rarely found in leadership positions in government. Similarly, they are barely recognized in institutions such as chambers of commerce and regional development agencies. Their exclusion has several ramifications: strategies are developed without taking women's expectations into account; services are delivered without tending to women's needs; and resources and know-how are disseminated without reaching women. This causes distortions in planning and implementation that are self-perpetuating.

BACKGROUND

At the suggestion of its Program Office, USAID/Romania was planning to develop an integrated development approach through a new strategic objective (SO 4.2, a cross-cutting initiative, on “Building Community”). There are many development activities that potentially could reinforce one another, and it was hoped that one *judet* (county), Cluj-Napoca, might be an example of seeking the linkages among them to achieve even better results. The original scope of work for WIDTECH’s D&G specialist, Marcia Greenberg, anticipated this initiative and sought to ensure that gender issues and opportunities were identified before the integrated initiative was launched.

Unfortunately, it was determined just before Ms. Greenberg’s departure for her TDY that the new SO would not be developed. Yet the Mission still sought gender analysis regarding local economic development (LED) programs in Romania. Considering Ms. Greenberg’s experience managing a LED program for the U.S. Department of Labor in Poland, the Mission asked Ms. Greenberg to work with 20 people who recently returned from an LED study tour to Poland and Hungary—and through that interaction, to identify issues and guidelines for ensuring that gender issues are taken into account during LED work around Romania.

Ms. Greenberg was scheduled to be in Cluj-Napoca for three days, Monday, December 6, through Wednesday, December 8. Preparing at USAID/Romania on Thursday, December 2, she suggested four focuses for her time:

- (1) Talking with several members of the study tour in advance, to do a rapid “needs assessment” before working with the full group;
- (2) Meeting with representatives of key LED institutions, such as the Regional Development Association (RDA) and the Chamber of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture (referred to hereafter as the Chamber of Commerce);
- (3) Meeting with women’s groups or others who might provide perspectives on women’s roles in economic development and community participation; and
- (4) Facilitating a 1.5-day workshop with the study tour group.

While in Cluj-Napoca, Ms. Greenberg met with the following:

- Four members of the study tour, including a woman who is Secretary at the Cluj County Council;
- Representatives of the RDA and of the Chamber of Commerce;
- Women in two nongovernmental organizations (NGOs): SECS and ARTEMIS;

- Members of a gender studies group of the faculty of philology at Babes-Bolyai University; and
- Two women entrepreneurs.

To support the study tour group, she developed proposed objectives and an agenda for the workshop (which were translated into Romanian), and facilitated a workshop from mid-afternoon on Tuesday through Wednesday (see Appendix A).

THE CONTEXT: LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES AND FACTORS

Objectives

Before analyzing how attention to gender may improve results for local economic development, it is important to identify what results are sought. For purposes of the WIDTECH technical assistance in Cluj, WIDTECH's representative based her analysis on several critical objectives of LED:

- To increase the number of well-paid, sustainable jobs;
- To increase income and resources of individuals and households;
- To increase the taxation base with which local government may provide infrastructure and provide for the social needs of community; and
- To improve the overall quality of life within a specified locality (Cluj-Napoca).

Each of these objectives has implications for women and men, for the elderly and youth, for city and rural residents. Focusing on the gender distinctions—many of which are illustrative of other distinctions—it is important to recognize that changes many benefit some groups and not others. For example, does a general increase in jobs or economic opportunities necessarily reach women, or predominantly men? If there are jobs for women, what are they—secretarial, support jobs, and social services, or managerial and professional positions? Similarly, how does an increase in income and resources within a household affect the women and the men in that household? How are the increased resources used—for food, for education, or for starting a new business?

Regarding local government, if LED results in greater resources for local government, how will they be spent? Who will set priorities and determine how to spend such monies—for example, for which infrastructure or social needs? Who is involved in determining a vision of a better economy, in describing the quality of life that is sought? Are women included?

Table 1: Gender Issues in LED Objectives

Objective	Examples of Potential Gender Issues
Increased number of good jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What sorts of jobs—for whom? ▪ Are there gender-related stereotypes for who does what work?
Increased income and resources for individuals and families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Whose income increases, and how does that affect the family? ▪ Do families benefit differently depending on who in the family generates income? ▪ Do new work commitments affect household dynamics?
Increased tax receipts for local government-provided infrastructure and social services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How are tax receipts used? ▪ Who sets priorities? ▪ Who in the community participates in pressing local government for services?
Improved overall quality of life within a localized area (Cluj-Napoca)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Who defines the quality of life that is sought? ▪ Who is engaged in weighing the factors and deciding tradeoffs?

Factors for Success: Who Is Involved and How?

Women and men figure in LED in two critical ways—as those who contribute and as those who benefit. Effective LED initiatives, as advocated by the United States and increasingly by the OECD, begin with community assessment of resources and comparative advantages, agreement on a vision or goal for the local economy, and collaborative efforts to take incremental steps toward building a competitive economy that provides opportunities for businesses, employees, and other local interests.¹ To those ends, successful LED initiatives must engage a broad and diverse sector of the population—people of different skills, interests, resources, perspectives. Further, they must be able to work together in public-spirited, collaborative, mutually reinforcing ways.

People as Resources

Certain sorts of people are needed for a successful LED process.

- People with vision, commitment, and determination;
- People of diverse perspectives and participation;
- Citizens with skills in advocacy, fund-raising, investment promotion, and communications;
- Representatives of various economic activities—for example services production, and social services—that are state-owned, or recently privatized, or sole proprietorships, small private businesses, and family businesses;

¹ See, for example, the LED booklet by OECD and the U.S. Department of Labor's EEI Handbook.

- Local and regional government officials—including elected and appointed officials and civil servants; and
- Citizens belonging to NGOs, civic groups, and professional and business associations.

Accomplishing the best results in LED initiatives requires the involvement of everyone's professional skills, business acumen, talents, and commitment. LED gains legitimacy and increases prospects for community satisfaction if it takes account of diverse hopes and expectations (see Table 2).

Capacity for Collaboration

LED has the strongest chances for success if it engages citizens who are public-spirited. People in the community must work together toward mutual goals, enjoying the benefits of economies of scale or cooperative sharing of resources—rather than competing for individual gain to the detriment of the community. For example, supposing that a factory is being closed, but that the assets will be privatized: Will the community work to gain the financial resources to upgrade the facility, and manage the modernized facility to provide jobs for many in the community? Or will one or two individuals gain ownership and sell off pieces of the property for immediate cash-in-hand, leaving the community with no jobs? The outcome may depend on whether women are involved. Their concern for jobs for their husbands, daughters, and sons might incline them to work for the modernization of the facility. The ongoing exit of young people (their children) from the community to Bucharest or even abroad might compel women to contribute their energy and resources to building a vibrant local economy.²

Further, the success of community-based LED initiatives depends on effective collaboration. Local or regional cooperation strengthens capacity for competition with other communities or economies. Consequently, community projects and activities must engage those who work in a spirit of collaboration, and must establish relationships of mutual reinforcement rather than power relationships. Women's skills in fostering collaboration and in mobilizing volunteerism make them ideal for these tasks.

² Of course, it is not always a question of men versus women or vice versa. Women might compete for scarce local resources or for jobs that are limited by "tradition" or sex discrimination. In that case, an alternative might be to work with allies in the community to combat such discrimination and to increase the opportunities available to women.

Table 2: Gender Implications for Success of LED Initiatives

People Needed for Success	Examples/Input from Cluj-Napoca	Gender Issues
People with vision, commitment, and determination	Men and women in the study tour group—quite an exceptional mix.	Do some visions dominate others? Will the community identify a local vision that attracts the commitment and contributions of many? How can the community be sure to involve all those who may have the vision and determination to push the initiative along?
People of diverse perspectives	Some people in the group wanted to focus on supporting business initiatives. Others (a number of women, but also a man who works with the church) were concerned about social issues: youth and elderly.	While not all women focus on the social and men on business, there is a bias in that direction. But what about the women who are real resources as entrepreneurs? How can one be sure to involve the diversity of needs, approaches, etc.—and have each be given similar respect?
Citizens with facility for advocacy, lobbying, fund-raising, investor relations, communications, etc.	One member of the group suggested that the key is to support citizens about how to request things. She said that Romanians are not used to lobbying, requesting—and therefore all need to be trained. Despite general warnings in Cluj that volunteerism is not popular and women do not have the time, two women from the study tour said that they do it; they want to change things and they have motivation.	If volunteerism is discredited from the socialist culture, then it is important to find those who will step forward and establish a new respect for volunteerism. For whatever reason, women seem more inclined (despite their time constraints) to give their time. This then sets an example for others in the community.
Representatives of various economic activities—e.g., state, recently privatized, sole proprietors, small private businesses, family businesses, companies with growth potential, services, production, social services	There were actually very FEW business interests represented in the Cluj group—in part because real business people (entrepreneurs) cannot spend 2 weeks on a study tour.	Business is not monolithic—and it is hard to predict which will prove more successful: a privatized state facility or a small, new company. Women may be in either --and may be the basis for economic success in the community.

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People Needed for Success	Examples/Input from Cluj-Napoca	Gender Issues
Local and regional government officials—including elected, appointed and civil servants.	The Cluj group included one woman with the County Council. This was quite extraordinary, as there are very few. She noted, however, that local governments have insufficient resources, which means that “women’s needs” may be last to be considered or funded.	This perspective is needed, but it should be recognized that it will be predominantly men. It is important to complement this group with women who represent the local community’s needs and expectations from local government.
Citizens within nongovernmental organizations, civic groups, and professional and business associations	The RDA has surveyed people, but has not engaged people in developing it strategy. The Cluj group has people with NGOs, but not from professional or business associations. One woman entrepreneur told us that there are no links between business and the community, and that the authorities’ development plans do not involve business.	This is often where women are—in the NGOs—and how their perspectives can be included. The business associations, however, may not include so many women. The Chamber of Commerce seemed to have fairly limited participation by women in business.
Public-spiritedness	The Cluj group of 20 exhibited extraordinary commitment to the welfare of the community.	Those who have this attitude should be involved. Economic development is not just business and profit-making!
Capacity to collaborate	The Cluj group worked together very well. It is not possible to know whether the gender balance made a difference; or whether women participating helped the group to bond. But they began with a group that was fundamentally strangers, and after 2 weeks, they have a real esprit de corps!	While there are few studies to prove this, there are some reasons to believe that women may contribute to the process a sense of group and of collaboration.

WOMEN WITHIN LED SECTORS IN ROMANIA: GOVERNMENT, BUSINESS, AND COMMUNITY

A critical factor to remember in the E&E region, and in Romania as well, is that women are valuable resources in the community. They are highly educated—as doctors, engineers, social scientists, and chemists. In addition, they are often determined to “do something” with their education—to initiate and take action—not only for themselves, but also for their families. Usually responsible for family needs, and often for household budgets, they know their economic needs.

Further, women are often active members of the community, in positions and institutions that are important resources for LED. Women are often founders of NGOs, active in civil society. There are also women entrepreneurs, women managers of current or formerly state-owned facilities, women in social services, and women in the media.

Another factor that may not be proven but offers anecdotal evidence is the degree to which women collaborate and work together within a community. Women may work together to help a family in need, to protest a health hazard or traffic threat to children, to argue for better teachers in the schools.

Yet women’s participation and input are often excluded because of traditional roles, discrimination, and lack of confidence. One businesswoman suggested that while there is exclusion and prejudice by the community against businesspeople in general (“There is greater loyalty to state companies, and private entrepreneurs are not just envied but cursed!”), it is even worse for businesswomen.

Women in Leadership or Government

Women are very poorly represented as leaders in government. There are very few women mayors in Romania (only in exceptional cases in very small villages). In Cluj-Napoca, there is only one woman among 45 local councilors. And typically women do not head local government departments. One woman who is an exception and holds a significant position in the county government recalled that, because of the way she was treated as a woman in her position in her early years, she frequently went home after work and cried.

There seem to be two reasons for this. First, Romanians frequently cite a traditional Romanian saying: Men may be the heads, but women are the necks. This refers to the fact that women are often “second in command” or working just behind the scenes. They may be advisors and they may take decisions—but not publicly.

The second reason for the lack of women in government is that they do not want to be part of a corrupt and disrespected system. This perspective was suggested by four different women in different situations.

Women's Statements Regarding Reasons for Not Entering the Political Realm	
1.	Women are not well-represented in politics because in fact they completely dislike it.
5.	Women do not want to expose themselves to [public] criticism, such as mud-slinging negative political posters, etc.

Women in the Private Profit-Making Sector

Despite tradition and their difficulties accessing capital and know-how, some Romanian women are in business. According to the Chamber of Commerce, of the approximately 15,000 businesses that are actively functioning in Cluj-Napoca, 1,500 are members of the Chamber.³ Ten percent of these may be led by women—but the Chamber of Commerce does not have any data.

Some businesswomen who spoke with the consultant suggested that there are companies in Cluj that are led by women and are very successful—but the women are not publicly seen very much. These sources also suggested that women in business tend to be exceptional in some way: they are single or divorced, quite independent, or are part of a family business. Otherwise, their family responsibilities impinge on their ability to dedicate themselves to the business.

In fact, however, how are those women supported—by associations, by the local government, or by technical assistance? Apparently, the Chamber of Commerce does not have any program particularly for women in business, or for young women beginning in business. Further, while the Chamber of Commerce publishes a newspaper and a weekly fax bulletin, these publications have never featured any women in business.

³ The Chamber of Commerce reported that approximately 30,000 companies have been registered.

Four Examples of Women's Entrepreneurship in Cluj-Napoca County	
▪	Pharmaceuticals Distribution: She is an engineer who managed a plant in Cluj until 1988. In 1994 she started her business with Eli Lilly, and now packages, promotes and sells, and distributes pharmaceuticals for several multinational pharmaceutical companies. She has nine centers in Romania and 179 employees.
▪	Crafts for Tourists: A member of the study tour recognized traditional products for sale in a small town in Hungary as those made locally in Cluj. In fact, women from a small town in Cluj County have been taking their crafts to Hungary to sell them to tourists there!
▪	Cosmetics Production: She is a chemical engineer. She has developed her own line of cosmetics that use natural ingredients and are fresh. Her product is much less expensive than imports, but those in Romania who have money to spend on cosmetics seem to prefer fancy foreign products.
▪	A Country Restaurant: She owns and operates a superb restaurant in a small village of Cluj. Her food is delicious—the study tour group ate there—and she has been very successful.

Women in the Private Not-for-Profit Sector

Typically women are very involved in civil society in Eastern Europe. While this is true for some women in Romania, there seems to be a limited cultural basis for civil society in rural areas. Women are accustomed to groups that are more oriented to family or to church, the latter often led by a minister's wife. One reproductive health organization, SECS, has experience with how carefully one may need to work at involving women from rural communities. The organization had a well-respected local doctor invite the women to a session on a holiday. The women attended because the doctor asked them to; they trusted her. During the meeting, the women had an opportunity to discuss problems, needs, and concerns. The women found it such a stimulating experience that they have been eager for ongoing meetings. Absent such a process, however, they would be have been unlikely to join or participate in community-based discussions and activities.

Similarly, women in another organization that is active within the city of Cluj noted that there are really rather few women's organizations. They suggested that there are some rather powerful environmental organizations with many women volunteers. But women, they said, do not define themselves so much in formal groups or structures. This concept is just very new in Romania. Yet a conference in May 1999 showed there are many small groups doing good work at the grassroots level. The groups, however, were predominantly older women or young women—not middle-aged professionals.

Men appear to be no more involved than women in civil society. They tend to retain their jobs longer than women. If they are part of the NGO sector, they are often the directors of organizations focusing on business or the environment. There seems to be very little civic involvement by men—older or younger.

Women and Regional Development Strategies

Apart from whether women are consulted, it appears that the process of developing regional development strategies is not very consultative. In this case, women's perspectives are but one example of how citizens' needs and perspectives are not incorporated.

For example, the RDA in Cluj has developed a "regional profile" to present the economic, social, and demographic circumstances upon which to apply a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis.⁴ This is a process for developing a regional development strategy. Yet the source of information for the profile was a questionnaire completed by respondents in each county—and the questionnaire did not include any questions regarding women as business owners, as employees, or as family members. Thus, the SWOT analysis and the strategy will not take account of whether women entrepreneurs need capital, business training, contacts with investors, technology infrastructure, or transport.⁵

What Happens When Women Have No Role in Policy Development
What is the result of excluding women from discussions to set priorities or develop policies?
focuses only on economics, and does not allow inclusion of social issues—for example, the presence and situation of minorities.

Community Interest in Gender Issues

Noting that gender issues such as women's involvement in LED should be a Romanian concern, not simply USAID's, the consultant was pleased that in Cluj there were various indications of interest in gender issues and in greater participation by women. In the academic setting of Babes-Bolyai University, there is a gender working group involving young people. The group has received assistance from Central European University, the Open Society Fund, and Mama Cash (Dutch) to study gender and ethnicity. The group has offered a course on "EcoTourism and Gender" and has been examining the issue of trafficking in women and girls.

During our discussion, one woman suggested that female high school students are very active and interested in going into business, but they lack role models, encouragement in school, and awareness of opportunities. Another pointed out that the media have distorted expectations and tend to present women in a strange and chauvinistic light. But one page

⁴ The RDA has an executive body of 22, all of whom are men.

⁵ There will be yearly updates during which the agency can add questions to the questionnaire, and the agency indicated it might add some questions regarding women.

of the local newspaper, “Femeia,” is dedicated to women, and that page is used to raise awareness and make people think.

Other examples of women’s activism and dynamism are organizations like SECS and ARTEMIS that focus on women’s reproductive health and on violence against women.

GENDER-RELATED IMPEDIMENTS TO WOMEN IN LED

Traditional Family Roles Occupy Women's Time

There are very traditional expectations regarding men and women in families and communities in Romania—more, it seems, than in neighboring countries. This has ramifications for community-based LED initiatives. Since women carry the triple burdens of home, children, and work, their time is valuable and sometimes hard to spare for community, or for travel away from home. Further, as was suggested by women in Cluj, women have difficulty in government service and in business because both require commitments of time and attention that women often cannot give.

Most Directors and Leaders Are Men

The predominance of men in traditional leadership roles is a clear reality in Romania right now that may significantly undermine the effectiveness and sustainability of USAID's LED support. If women who are deputies to mayors, assistants, or advisors are not included in meetings with investors, donors, and planners, LED support is not effective. Similarly, if women do the work but do not participate in training intended to impart new information and approaches, support is not effective. If there is a training program for mayors, or a survey addressed to directors, women's perspectives and input typically are not solicited. And often the person who participates or answers may not be the person with the greatest knowledge or the person most responsible for the subject actions. If men are the heads and women the necks, it may be that sometimes it is more important to strengthen the neck than to inform the head.

Romanians React Negatively to Movements such as Volunteerism and Feminism

Legacies from the old system—hostility and cynicism regarding “ideals” that were false or hypocritical—are impediments to community-based, participatory LED. One such ideal is “volunteerism.” In communist days, volunteerism was not voluntary. Consequently, there is a fundamental suspicion and rejection of suggestions regarding volunteer participation in LED initiatives. And the new capitalist, market culture does not encourage volunteerism either: “If a woman works and earns money [for the family], it's okay. If she works and does not earn money—why? She has other things to do!” This seems to be the traditional community and family attitude, espoused by older women and by husbands. We found some exceptions in Cluj, but they are not the norm.

There are similar legacies relating to “feminism.” Before 1989, there were 50 percent quotas for women. Several people mentioned the old slogan was “Let's Promote Women,” which led to placing unqualified women in government and produced a backlash. Many people still expect women to be unqualified. As a result, efforts to

address impediments to women's participation and to encourage women are often rejected. Getting women involved requires more concerted action than glib incitements to participate, and must be articulated in ways that do not smack of old ways.

Processes Tend to Leave Out Young People

The economic vitality of Romanian towns and cities depends in large part on the participation of young people. LED processes are about building economies of the future. It is therefore very important that young people be involved. They need to shape the vision for LED initiatives because the future economy will be theirs. They need to participate in planning and implementation because they are often more aware of technology and of globalization. Lastly, they contribute flexibility, creativity, and enthusiasm that are important to any such community process.

Yet communities are losing the talent of young men and women, each for different reasons. The gutsy, dynamic young men are not contributing to LED because they are attracted to opportunities in Bucharest or outside the country. Such out-migration weakens the economic potential of Romanian localities. For young women, the problem is different: They lack role models for participation, and do not see they have a rightful role in the LED processes. They may remain in the community, but they are not likely to participate in an LED initiative. One woman in Cluj summarized the problem: "[Young women] can't even imagine that they could gain some power . . . having space for themselves and going beyond families . . ."

Systems for Reaching Out and Involving Community Do Not Reach or Attract Women

Typically, selection processes build on old connections and networks. In forming an LED committee or initiative, a couple of people begin to ask others to join, reaching out to individuals or to organizations. But often those people are men, and their contacts are men or organizations whose members are men. Further, at the local level outside of Bucharest, there are very few women's organizations. Consequently, an LED initiative may be started and even expanded, and unintentionally fail to inform women in the community, gain their input or perspectives, or enlist their talents and expertise.

RECOMMENDATIONS: WAYS FOR USAID TO ENHANCE WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO LED

Note: As always, it seems that the recommendations regarding ways to pay better attention to gender issues and women's participation are just good practice. But while some of these recommendations may appear to be common sense or good practice, they are critical for engaging women in LED processes and projects.

Put Effort into Selecting Good, Qualified Participants—Men and Women Alike

The secret to success of the USAID-supported Cluj LED study tour was the thoughtful care with which participants were selected. Rather than asking one leader in Cluj, such as the mayor, to nominate 20 people (or even 10 men and 10 women), USAID took responsibility for selection. As a result, each participant, man or woman, was selected for his or her current role or responsibility, personality, reputation, and ability.

As small as this factor may appear to be, it was critical from a gender perspective. In this group, the women were not there to fill slots established by quota, or because of who knew or liked them. Rather, they were there for their skills and talents. Further, because they were in a position to participate strongly and effectively in the group, it appears that the group developed an extraordinary spirit of respect and collaboration. There was no evidence of first and second-class citizens in the group. Women stated their opinions freely and honestly, and the men listened and responded. The study tour appears to have been an exceptional experience for Romanians—and one unintended benefit of the tour may have been that men and women both learned new ways to relate to one another.

Integrate Awareness of Gender Issues into Training Curricula and Processes

If USAID offers training for LED—related to specific economic vehicles, such as incubators or telecottages, or related to general skills such as marketing or leadership—it should take care that the curriculum accounts for gender issues. For example, training for politicians or local development leaders about formulating messages for the media should consider women's economic activities as substance and women as target audiences.

It is also very important that training, conferences, and project implementation be conducted so that men and women learn one another's perspectives. This means not only putting them together in a room, but also making sure that they are speaking and listening to one another. For example, a simulated newsroom program supported by USAID seems to be predominantly women. This is unfortunate because the women would benefit from hearing male colleagues' reactions to their pieces—and similarly, the men who are not

participating might have benefited from hearing from women in a safe, collegial environment.

For LED, this is how they can develop goals and plans that will engage all expertise, address multiple interests, and benefit many. The free and open exchange of information is not automatic and sometimes requires purposeful encouragement. In the case of the Cluj group, the balance and mutual respect seem to have created a climate for exchange—but that was unusual.

Work with People Who Are “Second in Command,” Rather Than Just the Chiefs

The distinction between men in positions of leadership and women in “second-tier” positions must be addressed in LED initiatives. Typically, men who are the top-level people want to go to the “important” meetings. They may look at the location (Bucharest, for instance) and the invitees to determine whether it is a meeting they want to attend. But it is important to engage women both because they may be the people who actually do the work (in a local government office, the RDA, or an association, for example) and to include their perspectives.

One trick is to characterize meetings in such a way that the “heads” do not want to attend—and therefore send their second-in-command. This may be done by calling a seminar or conference a “working meeting,” and by keeping the meeting simple. This approach was recommended by someone working in Romania, and it works!

Take Special Actions to Ensure Women Are Involved

The EU-funded RDA and Chamber of Commerce both illustrate what may happen if no attention is paid to women as participants. With EC/PHARE money, the RDA-NW has held a competition for funding development projects. As there is nothing in the competition procedures regarding women’s projects, there will be no way to know whether women had information about the competition. It will not be known whether women had skills, or access to technical support, to put together proposals. It is likely that the RDA will give money to men to do projects that involve and benefit men.

Similarly, the Chamber of Commerce has not reached out to women, and may be quite irrelevant (and unhelpful) for women in business. Outreach would take some purposeful action—which ultimately could benefit the local economy.

Several approaches can be taken to ensure that women are involved:

- Have some programs or discussions for women only.

- Use existing women's groups—rural communities' church groups or a university gender working group—as partners for LED initiatives, or use the SECS approach of asking a person of status in the community to invite women's participation.
- Reach out to young women (and men) from universities to participate in debates about LED directions, attend seminars, and join organizations.
- Provide guidance to facilitators or leaders about how to encourage women in mixed groups to speak out and speak honestly.
- Keep in mind that women (and men) in business cannot attend lengthy study tours; so develop ways to get their input and expertise in efficient, short periods.
- Require that projects involving surveys, competitions, and the like provide women the information, access to support, and incentives they need to participate.

APPENDIX A
WORKSHOP AGENDA

**CLUJ STUDY TOUR DE-BRIEFING
POSSIBLE/DRAFT AGENDA
DECEMBER 7-8, 1999**

Tuesday afternoon/evening, December 7, 1999:

16:30 “Getting to Know One Another”:

- Name
- Job affiliation/role
- One noteworthy (impressive, funny, helpful) thing s/he did during the study tour.

17:00: “Reviewing the Study Tour”:

An exercise to help the participants review/map what they did – and thereby introduce it to the facilitator. There will be three working groups, as follows:

Experts

For each, map out:

- Who, what talk about, was it good/helpful?
- What sort of expertise (both professional and otherwise) do the members of the Study Tour offer?
- What further expertise needed, from the individuals and institutions in Hungary and Poland, from people like them, or on their topics.

Organizations and institutions

For each, map out:

- How was it founded
- What are its vision & goal
- Who has participated – different interests or groups or members . . .
- What was and is its plan (up to now, and for next 5 years)?
- Any “lessons learned”: both positive and negative?

Collaborations

For each, identify:

- Examples of community with community; government with private sector; government with NGOs; NGOs with private sector; all three together.
- What were the challenges, difficulties for each?
- What have been the advantages of each?
- Lessons-learned: both positive and negative?

Wednesday, December 8, 1999:

9:00- Setting Objectives for the Day: What do People Want to Accomplish?

9:30 Proposed Objectives: By the end of the day, participants will have:

1. Had a chance, together, to review what was seen and learned
2. Agreed to some common vision or goals
3. Identified key steps for the next 6 months
4. Transmitted needs (for assistance, contacts, support) to USAID

Discuss modifications, deletions, additions

Checking the Proposed Agenda – will it achieve that? Anything missing?

Any concerns about time-allocation?

9:30- Vision for Cluj Five Years from Now: Discussion

10:00

10:00- Reporting Back from Yesterdays Three Working Groups

11:00

11:00- coffee break

11:15

11:15 What You Want to Do – What projects (come up with 5-7)

12:30- Lunch

13:30

13:30 Resources: What is Needed for Each – small groups, decide:

People/partners needed

Know-how and technical assistance

Financial resources

14:30 Report back

16:00 Next Steps: A Six Month Work Plan

What needs to be done

Who will do each task

APPENDIX B

NAMES OF PEOPLE MET IN CLUJ-NAPOCA

NAMES OF PEOPLE MET IN CLUJ-NAPOCA

Adriana Melnic, SECS
Sarina Bumbulut, Artemis
Eniko Magyari-Vincze
Eniko Demeny, Center for Equal Opportunities
Maria (ciobanu) DiAconescu, Artemis
Simona Bitlan, Center for Equal Opportunities
Mariuca Pop, Secretary at Cluj County Council
Sanda Catana, Deputy Director RDA
Dana Benea, Director for International Relations, Chamber of Commerce, Industry & Agriculture

From CLUJ University, Faculty of Philology
Liviu Cotrau, Head of English Language Dept.
Cristina Dumitru
Simona Iancu
Rares Moldovan
Livin Cotran
Preda Alina
Todea Adriana
Michaela Mudure, Dept. of Women's Studies
Ileana Galea

Cristina Stamatian, Carina (women business owner)
Viorica Ilies (woman business owner)